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DOCUMENTS

Attempts toward Colonization : the Council for New England and the Merchant Venturers of Bristol, 1621-1623.

[Communicated by Miller Christy, Esq., of Pryors, Broomfield, Chelmsford, England.]

SEVERAL years since, through the kindness of Mr. G. H. Pope, Treasurer of the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol, I was permitted to examine the early records of that body and to extract therefrom information necessary for a work on certain early Arctic voyages upon which I was then engaged.¹ On that occasion, I observed, and partly extracted, some documents in which were recorded the various steps taken between the years 1621 and 1623, by the New England Company or Council for New England (of which Sir Ferdinando Gorges was the founder and leading spirit) to induce the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturers and others to join in its attempts to forward the settlement of New England. Recently, through Mr. Pope's continued kindness, I have been able to examine these documents with greater care and to extract them fully. They are of no little interest in connection with the history of the early attempts to colonize New England; and, as they have remained until now quite unknown, I propose in what follows to print them in full, together with such explanatory matter as may seem desirable.

Before considering the documents themselves, it will be well to introduce briefly—(1) The ancient Bristol merchants' guild among whose archives they have lain hidden for nearly three hundred years; (2) Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the man to whose efforts the first attempts to colonize New England were mainly due; and (3) the chartered company, commonly known as the "New England Company," which he formed to carry out his schemes.

(1) The Fellowship, Society, or Company (as it is variously called) of Merchant Venturers of Bristol is a very interesting and almost unique survival from early times. In mediæval days, Bristol (like most other of the larger English cities and towns) possessed many more or less similar organizations; but, of all these, the one

¹ *The Voyages of Captain Luke Foxe, of Hull, and Captain Thomas James, of Bristol, in Search of a North-west Passage, in 1631-32* (London, Hakluyt Society, two vols., 1894.)

in question alone now exists. Of its foundation there is no record;¹ but traces of such a guild are discoverable as early as 1314, and it probably existed in some form much earlier. By the year 1467 the Society was fully organized, and in 1500 an elaborate code of "Actes and Ordenaunces" (which still exists) was framed for its regulation.

In these early days, the Society appears to have been little more than a sort of trade-committee of the Bristol town council; but, in 1552, King Edward VI. granted to it a charter, under which its independence was secured and it was incorporated as "The Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol." One Edward Pryn was named as the first master, and the first wardens were Thomas Hickes and Robert Butler. Fresh charters, under which its rights and privileges were confirmed or extended, were granted to it by Queen Elizabeth, by Charles I., and by Charles II. The most important of these charters was that of Charles I., under which its constitution was finally settled, much on the lines at present existing. It gave to the master and wardens ten of "the gravest and discreetest" members as assistants. The "Court" of thirteen members thus constituted still forms the executive body, and is elected annually on "Charter Day" (the 10th of November), as the master and wardens had been long before King Charles I. granted his charter. Under all these charters, the privilege of membership was confined to freemen of Bristol; and, although these freemen have long been decreasing in number and now form a very small portion of the whole body of citizens, what follows will show that the affairs of the Society have been well and wisely administered.

An ancient record states that, in the reign of Edward IV., the Society occupied, for business purposes, "the Chappell and Draughte Chameber apperteyninge thereto in the hows callyd Spyceris Halle, uppon the Back of Bristowe." In 1561, nine years after the Society was first incorporated, it acquired, and thenceforth used as its common hall, the desecrated chapel of St. Clement, in Avon Marsh. The site of this building is still the property of the Company. Upon it, in 1701, they erected the present "Merchants' Hall"—an unpretentious but commodious building, in the classic style, to which a handsome council chamber was added at the back in the early years of the present century.

From the time of Queen Elizabeth (and probably from a much earlier time, of which there are no records), right down to the present day, the history of the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturers

¹ No history of the Society has ever been written, and I am indebted to Mr. Pope for the following information concerning it.

has been the history of commercial enterprise and civic progress in the city of Bristol. The roll of its members' names has been a list of the leading burgesses ; and its master, during his year of office, holds a position in the city scarcely inferior to those of the mayor and sheriff. It may be doubted whether, during the last three centuries, Bristol has not received as great benefits from its Society of Merchant Venturers as from its town council. The Society's records show that, for a long period, it watched with a jealous eye over the trade of the port of Bristol, and left undone nothing which might tend to increase its prosperity. Although the Society has ceased, for a long time past, to exercise its original functions, the benefits it has bestowed upon the city have become increasingly apparent.

It was the Society of Merchant Venturers which built Bristol's wharves and quays, largely with borrowed money and at an outlay which long remained unremunerative. It was the Society which presented Clifton Downs to the citizens. The latest of the Society's munificent gifts to Bristol is, perhaps, not the least. In 1696 and 1708, Edward Colston, a prominent citizen of Bristol and a leading member of the Merchant Venturers' Guild, founded an almshouse and a free boarding school, which he endowed with certain lands, of which he constituted the Society trustee. The almshouse still remains under the Society's control ; but, in 1875, the Charity Commissioners framed a new scheme for the management of the school. Ten years later, the new scheme was proved unworkable, and then the Society came to the rescue. In 1885, it erected, on the site of the old grammar school and in the centre of the town, the splendid block of buildings now known as the Merchant Venturers Technical College. The Society met the entire cost of building the college, which amounted to about £50,000, and now continues to maintain it solely out of its own funds. Nearly 2000 students—men, women and boys—now pass annually through the college, which is perfectly equipped, and the scheme has proved in the highest degree successful.

The ancient records belonging to the Society are not numerous, considering its antiquity and importance. They consist of the charters and the code of rules¹ already mentioned, the minutes of proceedings,² and various other miscellaneous documents. Among the latter is a large, thick, leather-bound, folio volume, labelled on the back *Book of*

¹ The code of rules is the earliest *original* document now existing, earlier documents being copies merely

² The minutes of proceedings previous to 1639 contain little more than the names of the masters, wardens and treasurers annually appointed ; but after that date the minutes are fairly full.

Trade, 1598-1693; in it are copied a large number of letters, petitions, statistical returns, and other documents relating to the rights and privileges of the Society and the trade of the port of Bristol, all carefully indexed. These, it must be understood, are *not originals*, but *office copies*, entered in the book for safe keeping and future reference. They are nearly all written with extreme neatness; and it appears probable, judging from the hand-writing, that all the earlier documents were entered by the same hand and all at one time—not as received or dispatched by the Company. In addition to the documents (ten in number) with which I am specially concerned and shall describe hereafter, there are lists of Bristol ships lost or sold to foreigners; particulars of wharfage and other duties payable on goods entering the port; statistics of the produce imported into Bristol during the seventeenth century; correspondence with the Lords of the Admiralty and Admiral Sir Thomas Button¹ in reference to the guarding of the Severn estuary against the ravages of pirates; letters and other documents relating to the expedition which the Society, or a number of its leading members, sent out, in 1631, under Captain Thomas James, to search for a Northwest Passage to Cathay through Hudson's Bay; ² petitions to the Crown in favor of rights and privileges which had been infringed by the merchants of London and elsewhere; correspondence as to the contributions in money, ships, and men to be given by the Bristol merchants towards the suppression of pirates (whether the Spaniards and Dunkirkers in 1597 or the "Turkes of Algier" nearly a hundred years later) and the redeeming of English captives known to be in their hands; and many other documents of similar nature. It is true that most of them are mainly of local importance; but all are worthy of the notice of some competent historian.

The foregoing constitute (as has been said) a meagre collection of records compared with that which such a society might have been expected to possess. Undoubtedly many earlier records have been lost. A number are known to have been taken away in the seventeenth century, and the Society has recently made a praiseworthy, but unsuccessful, attempt to recover these by the offer, through the public press, of a substantial reward. Were they in

¹ Thomas Button, fourth son of Miles Button, of Worlton, Glamorganshire, was born about 1570 and entered the navy in 1589. In 1612, he was chosen to command an expedition sent out to search for a North-west Passage by way of Hudson's Bay. Soon after his return in the following year he was appointed for life Admiral of the Narrow Seas (the Irish Channel), and he saw much active service while serving in this capacity. He died in 1634.

² These letters and documents are printed in full in my work (already alluded to) on the voyages of Captains Luke Foxe and Thomas James to Hudson's Bay in 1631 (pp. cv.-cvii. and cxxxix.-clxviii.).

existence they would probably prove of the utmost interest in throwing light upon the early trade in fish between Bristol and Iceland; upon the expeditions carried out by Thlyde and others, between 1480 and 1497, in search of the fabulous Atlantean Island of Brazil, of which William Worcester (or Botoner¹), Don Pedro de Ayala,² and other writers have made mention; upon the important voyages of John Cabot in 1497 and 1498, as to which we have extremely little direct information; upon the voyage of Captain Martin Pring to the coast of "Virginia" in 1603, dispatched (as Purchas says) by "sundry of the chieftest merchants of Bristol"; and upon many other similar ventures undertaken by the enterprising inhabitants of that ancient sea-port.

It has already been remarked that the Bristol society is an almost unique survival. The only other similar society which now exists outside of London, and is at all comparable with it in respect of age, nature, and importance, is the Society of Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This body claims to have existed since the reign of King John and possesses a large and most interesting collection of records, ranging in almost unbroken series from the year 1480 to the present time.³ Another similar society of lesser importance, though equally ancient, is the Society of Merchant Adventurers of York, which claims to date from the year 1200 and still exists. It has a limited number of ancient records.⁴ Yet another somewhat similar body, though apparently of much more recent origin than any of the foregoing, was that which bore the cumbrous title of "The Governor, Consults, and Societie of Merchant Adventurers of the City of Exon traffiquinge to the Realme of ffrauunce and the Dominions of the ffrench Kings." It was incorporated by a charter granted by Queen Elizabeth on June 17, 1560, but probably existed in some form at an earlier date.

¹In his *Itinerarium sive Liber Rerum Memorabilium* preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

²In his well-known letter dated July 25, 1498 (see *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish Series*, I. 176-177.

³Extensive extracts from these records are in course of being printed in a work edited by Mr. F. W. Dendy and printed by the Surtees Society. The first volume was published in 1895 and a second is in preparation.

⁴See the *First Report of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission* (1870), p. 110. The Society's ancient hall—one of the most interesting secular buildings in York—still stands in Fossgate. Over the entrance, facing the street, is the coat of arms of the Society, sculptured large and blazoned in colors, with its quaint motto, *Dieu nous donne bonne aventure*. Within is a court-yard, beyond which is the Merchant's Hall. On the ground floor is a small chapel, apparently of the early part of the fifteenth century. Above it, on the first floor, is the large timber-built common hall, of somewhat later date, its walls hung with portraits of leading members, extending back for three centuries. The place is freely shown to all and is well worth a visit.

Though it has long ceased to exist, some of its old records, extending in date to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, have been preserved.¹ Leaving out of account the great London companies, there also still remain, in some other of the more ancient English cities and towns, a few smaller companies, relics of the many medieval guilds, which concern themselves with special trades. The Trinity Houses of Kingston-upon-Hull and Newcastle-upon-Tyne are also worth noticing in this connection, as having had their origin in similar early guilds.

Such, then, has been the history of the ancient medieval guild, still existing in an altered and modernized form, which has preserved among its archives the documents hereafter to be noticed. It will next be necessary to speak of the man whose efforts towards the colonization of New England those documents record.

(2) Sir Ferdinando Gorges—the “Father of English Colonization in North America,” as he has been aptly termed—came of a family of good position, long seated at Wraxall, in Somersetshire. He was probably born in or about 1566, but the exact date is uncertain. Early in life, he adopted the profession of arms. In 1591, during the siege of Rouen, at which he was wounded, he received from his commander, Robert Earl of Essex, the honor of knighthood in recognition of his services.² Before this, he had had charge of the defences of Plymouth, where he seems to have acted as a sort of military governor, though often absent on active service abroad. In 1605, he took a leading part in promoting the voyage made by Captain George Weymouth to the coast of what is now the state of Maine; and, when Weymouth returned to Plymouth in the fall of the same year, bringing with him five North American Indians, natives of the country he had visited, Gorges received three of them into his own house. From his intercourse with them after they had begun to learn English, he became deeply interested in what they told him of their country. Out of this interest, there grew up in his mind a project for the colonization of the land of which the Indians had told him; and to his efforts was due, in a large measure, the establishment of the Virginia Company in the year 1606. It will be remembered that King James, by the charter of April 10, 1606, authorized the establishment of two separate colonies, a southern and a northern; that the second (or northern) colony, controlled

¹ These were discovered some years since, among the papers of the still-existing Society of Weavers, Fullers, and Shearmen of Exeter, and extensive extracts from them were printed by Mr. William Cotton in *An Elizabethan Guild of the City of Exeter* (Exeter, 1873).

² See Metcalfe's *Book of Knights* (London, 1885), p. 137. Twenty-two other knights were made on the same occasion.

from Plymouth, was a failure from the beginning ; and that in 1620, on petition of Gorges, a patent was issued incorporating a new Plymouth Company, commonly called the Council for New England. This patent (now often spoken of as "The Great Patent of New England") finally passed the seals on November 3, 1620, and must next be noticed.

(3) By this patent the King incorporated "a body politicque and corporate," to be called "The Council established at Plymouth, in the County of Devon, for the planting, ruling, ordering, and governing of New England in America." It was to consist, in perpetual succession, of not more than forty members. The King granted to it for ever (subject only to his own supreme sovereignty) the whole of that portion of North America extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific and lying between the fortieth and the forty-eighth degrees of north latitude, which region was henceforth to be known as New England. The rest of the charter is occupied by provisions as to the election of a governor and other officers, the admission of new members, the administration of justice within the company's territories, the punishment of offenders, the settlement and government of the territory, and such like matters. It is provided that, for seven years, all goods imported into the colony from England shall be free from duty ; also that, for twenty-one years, all goods imported into England from the colony shall be admitted free from all duty, except an impost of five per cent. The rights of fishing along the coast were specifically granted to the company, which was empowered to seize and confiscate the ships and goods of any person who might, without the company's consent, resort to the colony or the adjacent seas for the purpose of trading or fishing.

The violent opposition which the company experienced at the outset of its career¹ naturally hindered it from commencing the work of colonization for which it had been formed. Nevertheless, there is evidence that meetings of the Council were held during the year 1621, and a certain amount of business was transacted—chiefly the consideration of measures for "freeing" the company's patent or procuring a new one, for commencing the actual settlement of the company's territories, and for preventing the infringement of the company's rights by unauthorized persons who were seeking to trade within its territories or fish along its coasts. This brings us to the consideration of the ten documents preserved at Bristol, of which five relate to the steps taken by the company at this period, and

¹ The controversy which took place over the patent has been admirably summarized by Dr. Charles Deane in Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, III. 295-310.

are, it is believed, the earliest records of the company's proceedings now in existence.

The first of these (I.) is a copy of a letter, bearing the date September 18, 1621, from the Privy Council of England to the mayors of Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, and other west-country towns. It has been printed by Brodhead¹ from the copy in the Register of the Acts of the Privy Council, and therefore is not printed here. The letter (which is signed by nine privy councillors and by the clerk of the Privy Council) recites that, although the New England Company had offered every facility to merchants and others to become partakers in its rights and privileges, by consenting to admit them as members, nevertheless unauthorized persons, not members, had infringed or sought to infringe its exclusive rights by resorting to New England in order to trade or fish there; for which reason the Council wrote desiring the mayors of the cities and towns most concerned to warn their respective townsmen that, in future, all such infringements of the company's rights would be strictly dealt with and severely punished. Without doubt, this letter was written at the request of the New England Company, which sought to strengthen its position and to better establish its rights by obtaining such a warning letter. It appears probable, from what follows, that the particular copy of the letter which was intended for the mayor of Bristol was entrusted to Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who delivered it in person to the mayor, together with a certain other document to be noticed hereafter. The mayor, Robert Rogers by name, doubtless thought that he could not better carry out the wishes of the Privy Council than by communicating a copy of the letter to the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol, and this accounts for its appearance among the records of that body.²

The second of the Bristol documents is that, already mentioned, which Sir Ferdinando Gorges delivered to the mayor with the letter above alluded to. It is undated, but passages in the two succeeding documents leave no doubt that it is of about the same date as the letter (namely September, 1621). It sets out, in thirty clauses or "articles," a formal scheme, which the company had drawn up, for the regulation of the trade with, and for promoting the settlement of, New England. The company, it appears, did not intend to undertake trading or colonizing on its own account, but wished to farm out its rights by means of a license to be granted to a subsidiary joint-stock company, which was itself to consist of several

¹ *N. Y. Col. Docs*, III. 5.

² *Book of Trade, 1598-1693*, fo. 104.

smaller affiliated companies, one in each of the five chief west-country ports. There were to be committees, each consisting of eighteen members or "commissioners," in the cities of Bristol and Exeter, and similar committees, but each consisting of twelve members only, in the towns of Plymouth, Dartmouth and Barnstaple. Each committee was to be more or less independent and self-controlled, with its own treasurer, clerk, registrar, and other officers; but it was desired that all should co-operate in working; and, to facilitate this, it was provided that a general meeting should be held half-yearly at the more-or-less-centrally-situated town of Tiverton. The "Articles and Orders" intended to control the working of these local committees under the general supervision of the Council for New England are very quaint and curious; but it must be admitted that they do not strike one as very workable or practical, and this was the view taken of them (as will be seen hereafter) by the shrewd Bristol merchants of the time. The "Articles and Orders" in question run as follows:¹

[II.] *Articles and Orders Concluded on by the PRESIDENT and COUNSELL for the Affaires of NEW ENGLAND for the better Government of the Trade and [for the] Advancement of the Plantacon in those parts.*

1. ffirst, that, in the Citty of Bristoll and Exon, and in the Townes of Plymouth, Dartmouth, Waymouth, and Barnstable. there shalbe a Treasouro^r in either of them, togeather wth certayne Comission^{rs} chosen by the Adventurers, To all whome the Tresure, Government, and pollicye of the Trade for New England shall bee Comitted; as alsoe such other officers as shall bee founde convenient for that Service shalbe designed to their pticuler Charge.

2. And, for the better Government of the Said affaires: It is further ordered that there shalbee chosen xvij Comissioners out of the Adventurers of the Citty of *Bristol* and the pts therevnto adioyning, and xvij out of the Citty of *Exon* and the pts therevnto adioyning, and xij out of the Towne of *Plimouth* and the pts therevnto adioyning, and xij out of the Towne of *Dartmouth* and th^e pts therevnto adioyning, and xij out of the Towne of *Barnstable* and th^e pts therevnto adioyning; out of w^{ch} nomber they are to choose their Treasouro^r for eu'y of the said places: And they soe chosen to nominate their Register, Auditors, Clarke, and other Officers.

3. And it is further ordered that the Treasouro^{rs} and Commission^{rs} (being so chosen by the Company of Adventurers of the Seu'all Citties and Townes Corporate, or the greater pte of them that shalbee present) shall receyve their comission for the Manad[g]ing of their affaires from

¹ *Book of Trade, 1598-1693*, ff. 105-109. It will, of course, be understood that the headings which are prefixed to these Bristol documents formed no part of the originals, but were added by the scribe who entered them in the Society's *Book of Trade*. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Pope for the care with which he has corrected the printer's proofs of these documents with the originals.

vs, the President and Counsell, according to his Mat^r authoritie in that behalfe graunted vnto vs.

4. And it is further provided that none shalbee admitted to bee a Comission^r in either of the Citties that shall not putt into the *Capital* stocke for trade and fishing of his owne propp^r goodes []¹: Nor none to bee admitted Comission^{rs} in either of the said townes but hee that shall putt in []¹ of his owne proper goodes.

5. The Comission^{rs} thus chosen shall attend their services the space of sixe yeeres; and, at the end thereof, one third pte to bee removed by bills or lotts to be drawne. And soe, after twoe yeeres, a like third pte to bee removed; and soe, from tyme to time, an eleccon to bee made of new [Commissioners]; and that course to bee contynued eu^y two yeeres, vnlesse there shallbe found other just and reasonable cause, through death, sickness, or misdemeano^r, of any to be removed, in whose place a new one is to bee chosen.

6. That whoso^er intends to trade in those Territories of *New England* must resolue to putt in his adventure into the Comon Stocke of one of these Citties or Townes Corporate, togeather wth the rest, to be manadged by the Treasouro^r and Comission^{rs} for the publike good of the Adventurers.

7. That, in case it shall be free for eu^y one, of what qualitie or condition soe^r, to putt in his said adventure from fiffe pounds to fiffe Thousand pounds, or more, as he please: And, after thend of eu^y voyadge, to receyve his gaine or losse as it shall fall out.

8. And, for that there canne be noe certeyne vse made of any trad or other comoditie ariseing wth in those Countreyes wthout the safetie of their goods and p^rsons that shall resort thither and assurance of those territories against any attempt of forraigne princes or the Barberus people natives; w^{ch} securitie is to bee attained by erecting forts, placeing of Garrisons, maynteyninge shippes of warr uppon the Coasts, and officers for the more safe and absolute Government of those parts (matters not to bee accomplished butt wth exceeding greate Charges): It is, therefore ordered towards the defraing of this Charge that, out of the first Capitall adventure, there is to be deducted the tenth penny, soe as the Treasouro^{rs} and Comission^{rs} are to account to the Adventurers but for nyne p^rts of the said adventure, the tenth penny being defaulted, as is aforesaid, togeather wth the proceeds thereof, and to be accounted for to vs the President and Counsell for the affaires of New England.

9. That eu^y yeere, about Michaelmas and Easter, there shall bee a Generall Meeting at *Teuerton*,² in the County of Devon, of the said seu^rall Citties and Townes, whether they are to send three out of either Cittie and twoe out of either towne, to resolve uppon their Mutuall proceedings; as, namely, to what Porte or p^rts of those Territories they will send any shipp or shippes, and what marketts are fittest to vent their comodities in, and what shippes are meetest to goe vnto those marketts; as, alsoe, whether the whole shall proceed uppon a Jointe Stocke or that eu^y Cittie and Towne doe proceed uppon their seu^rall adventures, w^{ch} by all meanes is conceyved to bee the worst, both for the publike and private [good].

¹ Blanks are left for these amounts in the document itself.

² Undoubtedly Tiverton was chosen as the place of the half-yearly meetings because (though not one of the cities and towns named) it was more or less centrally situated and easily reached from all of them.

10. And, if any thinge shall happen at the said meeting disputable betweene the said Comission^{rs}, not to be determined betweene themselves, that, in such case, uppon knowledg thereof given vnto vs, the President and Counsell, such an order shall be settled by vs as shall agree wth equity and indifferency to all *pts*.

11. If, in Case any of the Commission's in either of these Citties or Townes shall bee found negligent in the *p*formance of their orders or duties, vppon Certificat made thereof to vs, the President and Counsell, such further Course shalbee taken for reformacon as shall bee found behoofull in thⁱ behalfe, agreeable to Equity and Justice.

12. It is likewise provided that, some three months before the de^pture of eu'y shipp or shippes, there shalbee notice given of their names and burthens vnto vs, the President and Counsell, together wth the names of their Maisters, as alsoe howe farre forth they are able, wthout hinderance to their other ymployments, to helpe wth the transportacon of men and other necessities for the supplie of the Plantacon; vppon receipte whereof, a Comission for the proceedinge of the said shipp shalbee sent vnto them.

13. It is further ordered that none shall goe into those *pts* as a passenger to plante or inhabite before hee bee therevnto lycenced by vs, the President and Counsell.

14. And it is likewise ordered that the Captaine or M^r of the Shippes employed to those *pts* wth any passengers shall, before their coming from thence, bring Certificat vnder the hands and seals of the Governo^r and other Commanders for the time being, what *ps*ons he lefte there, and of what qualitie or condicon they weare; the w^{ch} hee shall deliu^r to the Treasouro^r, to bee recorded in that Cittie from whence he was employed, and the Coppie thereof to be sent vnto vs, the President and Counsell.

15. That, in one moneth after the setting out of any, the Accountes bee Audited wthin the same seu'all Cittie or Towne, that the charge may bee knowne; And that the Accounts bee read at their publike Courts or meetings.

16. That, wthin two moneths after the end of every voyadge, the accounts be Audited and levelled, and the gaines or losse made knowne and published at the said Courts.

17. That whosoeu^r desires to receyve his profitts arising out of his adventures, hee is to repaire to the Register of the names of the *Adventurers*, and to receyve under his hand a noate of his adventure directed to the Audito^rs, from whome he is to receyve the accounte of his Retorne, w^{ch} shalbee a Warrant to the Treasouro^r to pay the same vppon his acquittance and discharge for so much receyved.

18. The Treasouro^r[s] and Receyver[s] appointed by the Comissioners for the said Company of Adventurors shall bee answered for by them that soe choose them, or otherwise they to take sufficient securitie of them for making good the Cash they shall be intrusted wth.

19. And, for that it is thoughte fitt that those that labo^r for the publike should receyve some thing towards their expence and travell: It is further ordered that they shall have allowed vnto them one in the hundred of all goods goeing out or coming in for the defrayment of all Charges arising as well for travell as otherwise, as they are publike s^vants; And this to bee distributed at the discrecon of the Treasouro^r and the greater *pte* of the Comission's assembled at their ordinary meetings.

20. And it is further ordered that the Comission's shall not sell nor deliver any shipp or goods vnto the Company of their owne before the

same be prayzed by eighte or nyne of the number of the said Adventuro's w^{ch} are not Comission's belonging to that Citty or Towne.

21. And these Comission's are likewise to take into their Consideraçon what prizes it is fitt to sett vpon any Comodities that the Inhabitants and Planters in New England shall have gotten through their owne industry and labo^r, and in what manner they are to receyve satisfacçon for the same, and also to take care they are not exacted vppon in any sorte.

22. ffor the better supplie of the said Plantaçon, the said Comission's shall endeavo^r to furnishe the seu'all Townes or Habitaçons in New England wth all kind of necessary tradesmen, whoe shall (either as publike servants for the Company or otherwise), according to their discreçons, bee able from time to time to furnishe the said places with necessary provisions vppon reasonable condiçons.

23. It is further ordered that the Commissioners, Treasouro's, and officers. shall be solely be [*sic*] sworne by some of the Counsell th^t shall be assigned, truely and faithfully to put into execution their endeavo^rs, according to their vttermost skill, for the good and most profit of the Adventurors, and their true and their true [*sic*] and faithful dealing in all things wherein they are intrusted.

24. And it is further ordered that eu'y shipp of three score tons shall carry wth them twoe Piggs, two Calves, twoe couple of tame Rabbetts, two couple of Hens, and a cocke, w^{ch} they shall deliue^r at the Iland of *Menethiggen*,¹ to the hands of such as shall be assigned to receive them, for the use of the Colony.

25. And, for the Greater benefitt of the M^cchants and Adventurers in the Course of Trade: It is further ordered by vs, the President and Counsell, that the Comission's shall contracte wth the M^{rs} of the shippes that are to goe in the first fleete to leave in the said country the fift[e?]¹ Man of their fishing Company, together wth the necessary provisions for the fishing Crafte, as also Victualls, vntill the retorne of the fleete (whoe shall bee furnished by vs wth saulte at reasonable prizes), to followe their fishing courses, the better to better to [*sic*] make triall of all the seasons of the yeare, as alsoe to make provision for the lading of some shippes as soon as the next fleete or shipping shall arryve.

26. Vppon Retorne of any of the said shippes, the Captaine or M^r thereof shall repayre to such of the Counsell of New England as are next resident vnto them, to whome they shall give an accounte of their voyage and other accidents happening, that the same may bee Certified to vs, the President and Counsell.

27. further, if it shall happen that any, contrary to the treaties of trade and commerce, shall offer to crosse the proceedings of such as shall bee ymployed into those parts: It shall bee lawful, according to his Ma^{ties} auctoritie in that behalfe granted, to repell, and by all meanes and wayes to resist, the same.

28. As for the *Capitall Stock* for the setting of the Plantaçon, it is intended it shall be paid vnto the hands of the Treasour^{er} belonging to vs, the President and Counsell for the said Affaires of New England, and by him to be disbursed, according to order in that behalfe to bee provided.

29. That every man that desires to have any possession of land in the said Territories is to putt in his adventure into the said Treasury, and soe to take of him a bill of receipte for the same, for w^{ch} hee is to receyve

¹ Monhegan, no doubt.

after the rate of one hundred acres for eu'y single share of tenne pounds, to dispose thereof at his discreccon. And for eu'y man that shall goe vppon his owne charge to have, in like manner, one hundred acres for his share ratably, vppon like condiçons, payeng twoe shillings þ aġn for eu'y hundred acres, as chiefe rent to the President and Counsell; w^{ch} lands shall bee assured vnto them vnder the Great Seale of the said President and Counsell.

30. Those that shall determine or are desirous to settle a private plantaçon vppon their owne or their friends private adventure shall have allowed vnto them, under the Seale aforesaid, for eu'y pson soe by them transported to plant one hundred acres of land, payeng, as aforesaide, for the same, to the President and Counsell, two shillings þ ann, for eu'y hundred acres, And shall likewise enioy such other priuiledge as are agreeable to his worth or habillity.

The letter from the Privy Council and the foregoing "Articles and Orders" were probably delivered to the Mayor of Bristol by Sir Ferdinando Gorges towards the end of September (1621). At the same time, or perhaps a few days later, Gorges had a more or less formal conference with some of the leading merchants of the city, as will appear hereafter. At this conference, the terms upon which the Council for New England would be willing to grant licenses to individual merchants to fish along the New England coast were discussed. The larger question (as to the proposals contained in the "Articles and Orders") seems to have been no more than broached; but Gorges left having received a promise from the merchants that they would give the scheme due consideration and would communicate their decision to him as soon as possible. Having waited a fortnight or three weeks and heard nothing, Gorges, on October 12th, wrote from Ashton Court¹ (where he appears to have been staying) to the mayor (the before-mentioned Mr. Robert Rogers) to express his surprise that the merchants had not communicated their decision to him. His rather obscurely-worded letter, sent specially by the hand of one of his servants, forms the third of the documents preserved at Bristol and runs as follows ²

[III.] *S^r fferdinand Gorge his letter to the Major of Bristoll concerning the said letter and articles.*

To the right woo^l my very
Loving frind, M^r Rob^{te} Rogers,
Mayo^r of Bristoll, give theis.

Sir,—

The Paines and Care I have taken to make yo^r Citty p^rtaker of the benefitts that, by Gods favo^r and the industrious labor and Charge

¹ The splendid mansion of Ashton Court, standing about three miles southwest from Bristol, belonged at this period to Sir Hugh Smyth, Knight, whose descendants still own it. His wife was Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Gorges, Knight. After Sir Hugh's death in 1627, Sir Ferdinando Gorges married his widow.

² *Book of Trade, 1589-1693*, fo. 109.

of others, have bine discour'ed, doth sufficiently declare the good affecōn I bare you; and, therefore, I shall not and at this present [? attempt] to vse other arguments for prooffe thereof: onely I hould it straung that, having stand this longe for answer to the Lords letters and the orders left wth some of you, I have not yet heard from you or any of them. But it may be these offices are conceyved to bee rather of necessity for some private ends, then out of a voluntary disposiōn to doe a publike good: if it bee so, I canne sooner pdon their errors that are guiltie of that cryme then tell howe to reforme their natures. In a word, I desire of you to give mee acknowledgement vnder yo^r hand that you have receyved the letter, and that the Marchants have taken notice of the orders thereby expressed; the wth I desire you to send mee by this bearer, my Servant, whome I have caused to attend you on purpose for it. And even so, wth many thancks for yo^r kind enterteynm^t, I comit you to Gods Holy Protecōn and will always rest

Your very Loving frind,
FFERND GORGE

From Ashton,
Octob. 12th. 1621.

The mayor promptly replied to the letter of Sir Ferdinando, for he wrote the very next day, October 13th. He had (he says) delivered the letter from the Privy Council and the "Articles and Orders" to the Society of Merchant Venturers, which body had met, only two days previously, to consider them. The Merchants had (continues the mayor) found the Articles so "difficult" that, on the spur of the moment and in the absence from home of many of their leading members, they could do nothing in respect of them, but they would like further conference with Sir Ferdinando upon the matter. Nevertheless (added the mayor), the merchants hoped that if, in the meantime, any of them desired to send fishing vessels to the New England coast, they would be allowed to do so on their promising to pay to the company a percentage on their profits. Here is what the mayor said in full :¹—

[IV.] *The Major's answer to Sir fferdinand Gorge, in the behalfe of the Generality, touching his demaund.*

Sir,

The letter of the Lords of his Ma^{ty}s most honorable privie counsell, togeather wth the Articles concerning the affaires of New England, w^{ch} I receyved from you, I have deliue'd to the M^r and Company of M^{ch}'ts of this city; whoe, for answe're therevnto, have informed mee that, at their gen^{all} assembly twoe dayes past, they p^{rs}ved the contents thereof and doe finde the said Articles so difcult that, at p^{rs}ent, they cannot conclude, in regard of the shortnes of tyme to them allotted and for that many of their Company experienced in the like affaires are nowe from whome. Those w^{ch} are here intended to have had some conference wth your selfe, and to that end did send a special messenger to your Inne in Bristol, where hee spake wth one of your servants, who reported that

¹ *Book of Trade, 1589-1693, fo. 110.*

you would bee here the next morning, for wth cause they deferred their answer vntill yo^r coming. And now, seeing that your business will not p^rmitt you, the matter being of great consequence and concerning as well other places as this City, they determined not to doe any thing for the gen^rall wthout further deliberacon and also advise of the Adventurers of the other Ports, wth whome they meane to confer. Onely they desire that if, in the meane time, any p^rticuler men of their Company shall set forthe any shipping on a fishing voyadg for that Country, then to allowe you an indifferent rate, p^rporconing the same by the tonne, or otherwise, as shall be agreed vpon ; wth, yf you please to entertayne, some two of them will repaire vnto you, or els send you answer thereof wth all expedicon, either to Plymouth or London ; and soe, having not elce to enlarge for [at this] present,
doe rest,

Yo^r Loving frind,

[ROBERT ROGERS]

Bristoll, this

xiiijth of October 1621.

But the Bristol merchants were astute business men. With the cumbrous scheme propounded by the Council for New England, they would have nothing to do ; but they did want a share in the fisheries along the coast ; and, in order to ascertain the most advantageous terms on which the latter could be secured, they decided to temporize. Accordingly, while their mayor was in correspondence with Sir Ferdinando, nine of the leading merchants communicated on their own account with their parliamentary representatives in London, Mr. John Whitson and Mr. John Guy.¹ In their letter (which here follows), the merchants recited all that had taken place, enclosed copies of the documents which they had received, and desired their colleagues in London to procure a copy of the New England Company's patent and ascertain from it privately whether the Company's rights and privileges really were such as Sir Ferdinando Gorges had represented them to be ; for (they explained) some of their number were inclined to accept the terms on which a license to fish was offered if satisfied that those terms really were the best obtainable. They write : ²

[V.] *The Companyes letter to Mr. Whitson, Mr. Guy, and others at London, to certify them of the busines of Sir Ferdinand Gorge.*

Woorth Sirs.—

Our love to you remembered, &c. Here hath bine lately Sir fferdinand Gorge, knight, wth letters from the Lords of his Mat^s most

¹ John Whitson, alderman, and formerly mayor, of Bristol, was elected member of Parliament for the city on November 11, 1605, and sat through several parliaments. He was one of the chief of those who, in 1603, sent Captain Martin Pring on a voyage to the coast of New England ; and Pring, on this occasion, named a certain bay after him. John Guy, also an alderman of Bristol, was returned as member for that city on January 16, 1620–21, and he continued to sit through several parliaments.

² *Book of Trade, 1589–1693*, fo. 111.

honorable privie Counsell directed to the Mayo^{rs} of Bristoll, Exon, Plimouth, and other places, thereby requiring them to signifie vnto such of his Mat^s Subiects inhabiting neere the said Coasts whome it doth concern that noe p^{son} should presume to attempt or doe any thinge to prejudice or hinder the President and Counsell of New England in their trade and Plantacon in those *pts*: The tenor of w^{ch} letter, togeather with certeyne Articles concluded on by the said President and Counsell, wee have related vnto the Company of M^cchants and Owners of this Porte at a generall assemblie; whoe in no sorte doe like of the said Articles, being they concerne the establisheing and making of a Jointe Company Stocke throughout all the Western *pts* to be ordered and governed by the said President and Counsell; whereof wee have given him to vnderstand and alsoe of our determinacon not to doe any thinge for the gen^{all} w^{thout} further deliberacon and advice; yet, in regard that the Newfoundland fishing hath fayled of late yeeres, here are some that are forward to make triall of that new fishing; and, to that purpose (the knighte being present at o^r assembly), [they] did demaund whether the said President and Counsell had power to restraine vs from fishing on those Coasts; who answered¹ that it was not soe menconed in the patent, but that the whole land from forty to fortie eighte degrees Northerly latitude, lyeng on the Coast of *America*, was graunted wth all priuiledges belonging to free Lords, and that there could be noe fishing w^{thout} the vse of the land, w^{ch} wee could not ptake of w^{thout} his allowance;² wherevpon, it was demaunded what hee would require of vs for a shippe of one hundred tonnes to be sent thither on fishing and onely to make [such] vse of the land there as is made in Newfoundland; whoe at first demaunded tenne p^{cent} of o^r adventure, to be valued as well on the shipping as otherwise; but, after much debating of the matter, hee came to this point:—that, for eu^y thirtie tonnes of shipping that wee should send thither, hee would have a man carried over and landed there, with the value of tenne pounds to bee layd out in such provision as should bee appointed, only the charge of the man's goeing over to be deducted; and soe accordingly for eu^y thirtie tons of shipping, or else to pay tenne pounds in money for eu^y thirtie tons of shipping w^{ch} wee shall send thither, the w^{ch} will amount to fiftie pounds charge vppon a shippe of one hundred and fiftie tons; vppon w^{ch} termes, the setter forth or furnisher of the said shipp shall alwayes after have libertie to set forth that ship, or any other ship of the like burthen w^{thout} payeng any other duty or thinge to the said President and Counsell; for w^{ch} his demaunds hee hath given vs time to consider of. Nowe, good sirs, seing that here are some whoe are willing to adventure that way, our request vnto you is, in the behalf of the City in gen^{all}, that you wilbee pleased to procure a coppie of the letters pattents graunted vnto the said President and Counsell of New England (w^{ch}, as the knighte sayth, was lately confirmed againe aboute this time twelve moneth), and that you would alsoe pvse the contents thereof, to

¹ That is, "the knight" (Sir Ferdinando Gorges) answered.

² It is not very easy to follow Gorges in this statement. The exclusive right of fishing, both on the mainland and islands and in the seas adjoining, was (contrary to this declaration by Gorges) specifically granted to the company under its charter, as already shown. Possibly an explanation of his statement is to be found in the fact that strong objection had been raised to the granting of this exclusive right, and arrangements had been made, though they were never carried out, for the granting of a new charter, from which it was probably intended to omit the grant of this exclusive right.

know if he hath any power to restraine our fishing on those coasts, and to write vs your opinion thereof. ffor, if they have power to restraine, here are some that are willing, for their peaceable goeing thither, to give [i. e., *pay*] the demaund aforesaid; whereof wee desire your opinion, as alsoe what you conceyve is fittest to be done for the quiet enioying of the said fishing trade. And, for the charge that you shall be at in the premisses, it shall bee borne by the Company in gen^{all}. The Coppie of the said letter and Articles wee send you here wth to *pvse*; and so, haveing not else to enlarge for the *psent*, [we] doe committ you to the prote^ccon of the Almightye, and doe rest

Yo^r loving frinds,

JOHN LANGTON,
RICHARD HOLWORTHIE,
M^r LONGE,
HUMFRY HOOKE,
THOMAS WRIGHT,
HUMFRY BROWNE,
ANDREW CHARLTON,
WILL^m JONES,
WILL^m PITT,

Bristoll :

Octob. 1621.¹

As to the outcome of this correspondence and of the enquiries made by Messrs. Whitson and Guy in London, we know nothing; for the succeeding documents are of later date and relate to entirely different matters. Before noticing them, it will be well to refer briefly to certain other records preserved elsewhere, which carry on (allowing for a gap of seven months—from November 1621 to May 1622) the history of the Council's proceedings.

So far as is known with certainty, all the *original* documents recording the proceedings of the Council for New England are lost, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two patents granted by the Council. There exist, however, three more or less contemporaneous documents which appear to be *copies* of portions of the original minutes of proceedings at meetings of the Council. Two of these documents require to be noticed here.

The most important of these documents is a manuscript book in the possession of Mrs. Carew, of Crowcombe Court, Somersetshire,² in the beginning of which are neatly entered the minutes of thirty-seven meetings of the Council held between May 31, 1622, and June 29, 1623. It is quite possible that this may be the *actual* minute-book of the company, and not a copy; but, if this is the case, it is not easy to explain why the minutes of later meetings were

¹ The imperfect date has been added in another hand, which belongs, apparently, to a slightly later period.

² Crowcombe Court was built by John Carew, Esquire, about the year 1615.

not entered on the remaining leaves, now blank ; and the evenness of the writing seems against the idea that the minutes were entered at different times, as meetings were held. Whether the original or a copy, it is certainly of contemporary date.

The second document appears to be a copy of the foregoing, though it shows slight verbal differences (perhaps due to errors of the copyist) and lacks several leaves at the end—those on which the last two meetings (held on June 28 and 29, 1623) were, doubtless, recorded. This document is, perhaps, as much as half a century later in date than the events it records, and is, therefore, certainly not an original.¹

The third document mentioned above must be reserved for later notice.

The meetings recorded in the two documents here noticed were evidently the first formal meetings held by the company for the transaction of business. Earlier meetings there certainly were, as already stated ; but they were probably of an informal character and the minutes of them (if any were kept) were probably mere memoranda made on loose slips of paper. With the meeting held on May 31, 1622, however, regular meetings commenced ; for thereafter we hear in the minutes of the election of a governor (Sir Ferdinando Gorges), a treasurer (Dr. Barnabe Goche, of Exeter), a clerk (Mr. William Boles), and other officers ; while a box in which to preserve the company's papers was ordered to be provided ; negotiations were opened with the Earl of Salisbury for the hire of rooms, to serve as the head-quarters of the company, in the New Exchange ; and other business incidental to the commencement of the company's operations was transacted. Among the more miscellaneous things done were the granting of several licences to fish on the New England coast and the division among individual members of a considerable portion of the company's territories. The procuring of a new patent was also a matter which received a great deal of attention. Under date November 11, there occurs a passage which apparently relates to the letter from the Privy Council and the " Articles and Orders " already given :

" It is propounded that th^e Orders of th^e Lords of th^e Privie Councell be putt in print, together with th^e Orders for Settling of the trade and

¹ This document, which is preserved in the Public Record Office in London (*State Papers, Colonial Series*, Vol. II., No. 6), was printed by Dr. Chas. Deane in 1867 (*Proc. Amer. Antiq. Soc.*, Apr., 1867, pp. 59-96). When the first-mentioned document came to light in 1874 (see the *Fourth Report of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission*, p. 370), the same gentleman printed the concluding portion (that on the pages lost from the end of the other document), together with a list of the passages in which the two differ (see *Proc. Amer. Antiq. Soc.*, Oct., 1875, pp. 49-63).

Commerce in New England ; and a comand to all Masters of Shipps and their Company to bee sent and fixed by th^e Admirall upon the Mayne Mast of every Shipp, to be obedient hereunto."

Three weeks later, under date December 3, 1622, it is recorded that Dr. Barnabe Goche, the treasurer, had left town hurriedly for his house at Exeter, and that he had been authorized to take with him the company's common seal in order that he might be able to grant duly-sealed licences to fish to any of the west-country merchants and owners of ships who might desire to have such. Immediately following, comes this entry :—

"S^r Ferd. Gorges is desired to drawe the forme of a letter to bee sent into the Country with the Proclamaçons, to this purpose :—That it is not the Councell's meaning to stay or hinder any from goeing to New England in fishing voyages, so as they will conforme themselves to such orders as are concluded and agreed on by the Councell and committed to Dr. Barn : Goche, Treâr, to whom they may repayre at Exon, in Devon, for their commissions in that behalfe."

This passage enables us to assign a precise date to the next document (No. VI.) preserved at Bristol, which (though undated) is unquestionably the letter Sir Ferdinando Gorges drew up in accordance with the desire of his colleagues. It runs :¹—

[VI.] *The Counsell of New England theire letter to the Mayor of Bristoll concerninge their intent to grant license to trade on those Coasts, notwithstanding his Ma^{ties} proclamaçon on theire behalfe to the contrary.*

To the right Woo^rth
our very Loving frend,
the Major of the Citty
of Bristoll.

After o^r hartie comendaçons :—

Whereas his Ma^{ties} hath bine moved, vpon deliberat consideraçon and advice of the Lords of his M. privie Counsell, by his Princely Proclamaçons (for the reasons therein expressed) strictly to prohibite any from frequenting or visiting the Coasts of New England or entermeddling with the trade or comerce wth the Natives w^{thout} lycence of the Counsell for those affaires, as by the said Proclamaçons doth and may appeare : But, for that it is not thereby intended to debar any Regular or Honest [person] from a free recourse to those p^{ts}, so farre forth as they will conforme themselves to those reasonable condiçons and iust and lawfull orders that are thought fitt to bee established for the saftie of the Inhabitants there already settled and better advancem^t of that Plantaçon : To w^{ch} end, the Counsell for those affaires have directed their Comission to *Doctor Barnabe Goche*, Treasouro^r for that busines, and others therein mençoned, resident at Exon or thereabouts, to Graunt lycences to any desirous to goe as aforesaid : Whereof we haue bine moved to give you p^{ticular} knowledge, that any that way affected may vnderstand whether to repaire for his dispatch, w^{thout} further trouble or charge : And for that cause wee pray you to make the same knowne to those of yo^r Towne

¹ *Book of Trade, 1598-1693*, fo. 123.

[who are] that way inclyned, wherein you shall doe them a Comon Curtesie. Soe shall you finde vs ready to requite the same : And thus, not doubting of your care herein, wee comitt you to Gods Holy Proteccon and ever rest

Yo^r very Loving frends,
E. GORGES,
FARD. GORG,
SAMUELL ARGALL,

Will Boles

[December 1622.]

It will be worth while here to refer to the terms of the royal proclamation,¹ bearing date November 6, 1622, copies of which were sent out (as appears) with the foregoing letter. It forbids all subjects, not adventurers, inhabitants or planters in New England, to visit its coasts or trade there, save by licence from the Council for New England or according to certain orders of the Privy Council for the benefit of the Virginia colony.

The next two documents (Nos. VII. and VIII.) belong almost certainly to the same period. They were evidently drawn up in order to induce colonists to go to the colony and capitalists to invest money therein. The second of the two is very brief and, judging from its heading, was probably intended as a sort of addendum to the longer document. Both are very curious. They run as follows:—

[VII.] *Reasons showing the Benefitt that may ensue to these his Mat^{ies} Realmes by settling of the Plantacon in New England, and especially to the Western pts of this Kingdome.*

1. ffirst, it enlargeth the bounds of his Ma^{ties} dominions and annexeth vnto his crowne one of the goodlyest Territories for Soyle, Havens, Harbours, and Habitable Islands that ever hath bine discovered by our nation.

2. Secondly, it will affoord a world of ymploym^t to many thousands of o^r Nation of all sorts of people whoe are (wee knowe) at this present ready to Starve for want of it.

3. Thirdly, it will thereby disburthen the Comon Wealth of a Multitude of Poore that are likelie daylie to increase, to the infinite trouble and prejudice of the publike state.

4. ffourthlie, it wilbee a marvellous increase to o^r Navigacon and a most excellent oportunitie for the breeding of marrin's, for that the vessels that are to trade thither, and soe from thence to their seu'all m'ketts, are to bee shippes of good burthen [and are] to goe well manned and thoroughly fortified for defence of themselves and their Consorts.

5. fffifthlie, the Clyme being so temperate and helthfull as it is, it will, doubtlesse, afforde in shorte time a notable vent for o^r Clothes and other stuffs of that kinde, w^{ch} lyes nowe dead vpon o^r m^{ch}ants handes.

¹ Printed in Rymer's *Foedera*, XVII. 416, and in Hazard's *Historical Collections*, I. 151.

² *Book of Trade, 1593-1693*, ff. 141-143.

6. Sixthly, wee shalbee able to furnishe our selves, out of o^r Owne Territories, wth many of those Comodities that nowe we are beholding to our Neighbo^{rs} for :—As, namely, Pitche, Tarre, Rosen, Flaxe, Hemp, Masts, Deales, Spruce, and other Timber of all Sortes ; Salte and Wine (w^{ch} twoe Comodities a lone coste this Kingdome many thousands by the yeere); beside Madder, Oade, and many other dyeng Rootes ; Stuffes and graines ; As, alsoe, seu'all ritche furies ; togeather wth one of the best fishing in the knowne p^{te} of the world ; and sundry sortes of Apothecary Druggs not yet spoken of.

7. Seaventhlie, for the difficultie of the Enterprise (thankes be to God), it is, in mann^r, already past ; for that the whole coast (wthin the lymitts graunted by his Ma^{tie} to the Councell for those affaires) is not onely discovered by their meanes, but many the principall Portes and Ilandes actually possessed by some of the present vnderakers : And whether this yeere hath bene sent, beside those that are nowe in p^rparaçon to goe wth the Governo^r, neere aboute 400 men, women, and children,¹ as alsoe 60 sayles of the best shippes of the Western p^{tes} that are onely gonne to ffishe and trade for furies.

8. Eighthly, the Soyle being soe fertile and the Clyme soe helthfull, wth what content shall the p^ticular p^{son} ymploy himselfe there when hee shall finde that, for 12^h 10^h adventure, hee shalbee made Lord of 200 acres of Land, to him and his heires for ever : And, for the charge of transportaçon of himselfe, his familie, and Tenñts, hee shalbee allotted for eu^y p^{son} hee carries 100 acres more, at the rate of 5^s. for eu^y C. acres chiefe rent to the Lords of the soyle in whose land he shall happen to sitt downe : And what Laborer soeu^r shall transporte himselfe thither at his owne charge to have the like proporçon of Land vpon the aforesaid condiçons and bee sure of ymploym^t to his good content for his present maintenance.

9. Nynthly, yf hee bee a gentleman or p^{son} of more Eminency whose hath no greate Stocke to contynue his reputaçon here att home, how hapie shall hee bee yf hee can make but a matter of 100^l. or 200^l. providentially ymployed in the course of his transportaçon who shalbee therewth able to transporte himselfe, his familie, and necessarie provisions, and soe have allotted vnto him a quantety of Lande, wherewth hee shall not onely be able to lyve wthout scorne of his Malignors but in a plentiful and worthis manner, wth assurance to leave to [*sic*] good ffortunes to his posteritie, yf hee but industriously bee carefull to make the best of his meanes.

10. Tenthlie, seeing that the Councell for those affaires have eu^r had, and still have, a speciall desire in this their Courses truely and wthout vanitie or ostentaçon to endeavo^r the good of the Countrie, for the better declaraçon and manifestaçon whereof they are freely content, and doe hartily wishe that eu^y Country² wthin this Realme would be pleased to take a certeyne proporçon of Lande wthin their Lymitts, w^{ch} they shall have at 5^s. Rent the 100 Acres, wth Allowance of some 1000 acres wthout Rent to be ymployed for pious vses, whether they might send from yeere to yeere such of their people as might conveniently [be] spared and that are otherwise like to be burthensome vnto the State of the Comon Wealth ; w^{ch} may bee incorporated into one body and governed vnder such officers and Majestrates as please them that send such

¹ If this statement is correct, the number of those who went to New England at this period must have been much greater than is commonly supposed.

² Undoubtedly *county* was intended.

as they ymploy, who shalbee strenghtned wth such Liberties and imunities as shalbee thought fitt for the better advancem^t of that service : Soe may the County not onely from themselves [*sic*] to relieve the state of their poorer sorte of people but finde worthie ymploym^t for many younger brothers and brave gentlemen that nowe are ruined for want thereof.

[*II.*] Lastly, and above all the rest, by this opertunitye, there is noe Countie wthin this Realme but by this Course hath a speciall occasion and meanes presented vnto them to dedicate their best service to the God of Heaven and Earth, by endeavouring to advance his glory in seeking howe to settle the Christian ffaith in those hethenishe and desert places of the World ; wth whoe shall refuse to further, lett him vndergoe the blame thereof himselfe.

[*VIII.*] *Certeine breif Reasons that are thought fitt to bee propounded to the Western Counties to move them to the furthering of the Plantation of New England.*

That, yf it shall seem sutable to the affeccons of the Countie in gen^{all}, the vndertakers are content to a lott a Competent proporcon of Land, both wthin the Mayne and vpon the sea coast, where the Govern^r shall settle such *Numbers* of people vnder Commaunders and Officers as th^e Countie shall thincke fitt to furnishe wth provisions and shipping necessary for such a work, and the profitts and benifitts of their ymploym^t to bee for ever appropriated to their vses that soe send them, for the good of that Countye.

Yf this Course bee not liked, that then whosoever in p^{ar}ticular will send any number of tennts or servants of his owne, and soe bee att the Charge to furnishe and supplie them from time to time as cause shall require, hee shall, in like sorte, have a proporcon of Land allotted vnto him to make his best profit as hee shall thincke good.

But, for that neither of these may as yett p^{ar}adventure be held a fitt Course vntill a settled governem^t bee there established, then, for the present advancem^t thereof, lett eu^{er}y free harte and generous spirit that have either religion or nobleness contribute towarde the present vndertaking now in hand in what kind of provision soever he is most willing or best able.

The last two of the Bristol documents (Nos. IX. and X.) are just a year later in date than the foregoing. They are also some six months later than the date (June 1623) of the last meeting of the Council recorded in the two documents preserved elsewhere and already alluded to. We have, therefore, no extraneous information to throw light on the circumstances under which these two concluding documents were drawn up ; but their object is self-evident. Clearly, the New England Company, finding that its schemes were not flourishing and that its colony was making little progress, decided to make one more effort to interest others, and especially those of the west-country, in its undertaking. With this end in view, the company persuaded the King to address a letter to the Earl of Pembroke, lord lieutenant of Somersetshire,¹ urgently desiring him to do

¹ William (Herbert) third earl of Pembroke, son of Henry the second earl, was born in 1580 and succeeded to the title in 1601. After the accession of James I., he took an

all in his power to further the interests of the colony in New England by bringing it under the notice of all residing in the county of Somerset or the city of Bristol who were at all likely to care to help in forwarding the work in hand. The earl was, no doubt, willing enough to comply with the King's request; for, as one of the original patentees, he was an interested party. The King's letter to him runs as follows :¹—

[IX.] *His Ma^{ties} Letter to the Lo: Lieutenant and his Deputies of the County of Somerset and City of Bristol to moue others to joyne in the Plantacon of New England*

James Rex.

To our righte trustie and right welbeloved Cosen and Councillor, Will^m Earle of Pembroke, Chamberleyn of o^r Household and our Lieutenant of o^r Countie of Som^rset and Citty of Bristol, and to o^r trusty and welbeloved the Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of Peace of the same County and Citty.

Right trustie and right welbeloved Cousen and Councelor, and trustie and welbeloved: Wee greete you well.

Wee have formerly graunted o^r Royall Charter for the Plantinge of a Collonie in the p^{te} of New England, wth was not passed wthout due examinacon of the Proposicon then made and apparent assurance of good and worthie successe by that Plantacon for the advancem^t of Christian Religion and a good addicon, both of Honor and Profitt, vnto o^r Kingdomes and people. And, because, vpon the tryall that hath beene made by some p^{sons} of qualitie that have bine Content, for the publike good, to adventure their private estates and fortunes, the benefitts and comodities founde in those p^{ts} and the good retournes that have beene made from thence do approve the vndertaking to be of such Publike Hopes and consequenc as wee thincke it verie worthie of o^r care and assistance in any thing that may give a real furtherance therevnto: And that, accordingly, wee have taken into o^r consideracon that so greate a worke cannot well bee mannaged to the best advantage wthout the helpe of more handes and strength then are ymployed in it: We have first thought vpon those Westerne Countries in respecte of the scituacion and conveniencie (both for receyving the Comodities from the Plantacon, sending such provisions and supplies thither as shalbee requisite, and takeing an accompte of both to be the most proper and fitt to have a share and interest in that business), Not doubting but y^t, being pursued wth an assistance from thence, the successe and retournes will be soe beneficiall

active part in public life. He took a great interest in all schemes of exploration and colonization and was among the promoters of the Virginia Company (1609), the North-west Passage Company (1612), the New East India Company (1614), the Bermudas Company (1615), the New England Company (1620), and the Guiana Company (1627). By some he is supposed to have been the "Mr. W. H." to whom some of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed. He died in 1630.

¹*Book of Trade, 1598-1693, ff. 144-145.*

as will not only y^a charge in a good measure of profit but drawe in other countries¹ voluntarylie to offer themselves p^{tn}s therein: The Experience wee have had of your affe^{cs}ons to publike works doth likewise move vs the rather to invite you both by yo^r owne adventures and in-deavouring to move other Gentlemen and p^{sons} of quallitie and meanes in that Countye to joyne wth you in the advancemen^t of this Planta^{co}n, w^{ch} wee doe not onely propound vnto you as a worke wherein the Publike hath a greate interest but wherein yo^r adventures are in all appearance like to bring you good retornes of profit, w^{ch} the Pattentees will more p^ticularly make appeare vnto you by some Ministers of theirs appointed to attend you for that purpose. Wee hope wee shall not neede to vse much p^swasion in this p^ticular, where both publike and private considera^{cs}ons haue soe much force and yo^r good affe^{cs}ons soe ready to farther good workes. Nevertheless, wee doe expecte to receyve from you an accompte of yo^r proceedinges and an intima^{co}n thereby whome you finde ready and willing and whome not, that wee may [? take] such notice of both as there shalbee cause.

Given at O^r Pallace at Westminster, the Eighth day of December in the one and twentieth yeere of o^r Raigne of England, ffrance, and Ireland, and of Scotland the seaven and fifteth [1623].

The Earl of Pembroke promptly complied with the King's request. On December 13, he wrote to the mayor of Bristol (and, doubtless, to others within the county) enclosing a copy of the King's letter and requesting action to be taken thereon. The mayor no doubt communicated copies of both to the Society of Merchant Venturers, which accounts for their appearance among the Society's records. The earl's letter follows :²—

[X.] *The Lo : Lieutenant his Letter to the Mayor of Bristoll, informeing him of his Ma^{ties} letter, and withall desireinge notice of their resolu^{co}n, whereby hee may giue accompt thereof to his Ma^{tie} when hee shall be required.*

After my verie hartie comenda^{cs}ons.

Whereas it hath pleased his Ma^{tie} to take into his Royall Considera^{co}n the setling and advancem^t of the Planta^{co}n of *New England*, and to that purpose haveing directed his gracious l^{res} vnto my selfe and my Deputie Lieutenants, I have thought fitt to send you herein closed a Coppie of the said Letters; to the end that, being p^ticularly acquainted wth his Ma^{ties} pleasure and desire therein, you may as well be carefull to give them their due respecte, as alsoe th^t you may thereby knowe the better howe to order the course of you^r proceedings to his Ma^{ties} content and satisfac^{co}n: Wherein I should bee willing to further you^r inten^{cs}ons wth my best advice and p^swasions, as well for the profit w^{ch} may accrew vnto this Kingdome by soe beneficiall a Trade as this is likelie to bee, as alsoe for the p^ticuler Comodity w^{ch} may thereby much advantage the City of Bristoll. But you shall receyve such ample direc^{cs}ons from his Mat^e l^{res} touching the whole course of this busines that I shall nowe onely desire you to bee carefull that you give mee notice of yo^r p^{ce}edinges and resolu^{cs}ons herein, that I may bee able to give an accompt thereof

¹ Without doubt *counties* is meant here also.

² *Book of Trade, 1598-1603, f. 145.*

whensoever it shall please his Ma^{tie} to require it at my hands. And thus,
 bidding you verie hartilie farewell, I rest
 Your Loving ffrend,

PEMBROOKE.

Whitehall, this xiiijth
 Decemb. 1623.

This is the last of the ten documents preserved at Bristol, so we are left in ignorance as to what steps (if any) the Bristol merchants took in the matter.

At the date of this last document (December 1623), the New England Company was already practically in a moribund condition, though it continued to exist for twelve years longer. Of its proceedings for the next eight years, we have no record; but the events of the closing years of its existence are briefly recorded in the last of the three documents already noticed as existing elsewhere. This is another volume of minutes preserved in the Public Record Office,¹ and is certainly not an original document, being probably a copy of about the same date as the earlier volume of minutes also preserved there. It contains the minutes of twenty-two meetings of the Council held between November 4, 1631, and November 1, 1638—four meetings in 1631, ten in 1632, six in 1635 and two in 1638.² There is nothing to explain what has become of the minutes of the meetings held during the eight years and a half which elapsed between June 29, 1622 (when the first of these documents ends) and November 4, 1631 (when this document commences).

The chief business transacted at the fourteen meetings held during 1631 and 1632 was the dividing up of the company's territories among the individual members and the issuing of patents therefor. Of the proceedings during 1633 and 1634, we know nothing; but, in 1635, the company decided to surrender its charter back to the King, having largely failed to carry out its great schemes of colonization, and finding itself powerless to maintain its rights or to preserve order within its territories. The six meetings held in 1635 were chiefly concerned with the details of the surrender. The two meetings held three years later, in 1638, were called to close up the affairs of the company; and, with them, its existence came to an end.

MILLER CHRISTY.

¹ *State Papers, Colonial Series*, Vol. IV., No. 29. It has been printed by Dr. Deane in the *Proc. Am. Antiq. Soc.*, April, 1867, pp. 97-131.

² It is worthy of note that, although the Council for New England was supposed to have been "established at Plymouth," all its recorded meetings were held in London.